

Helping Stance: Supportive, Calm And Curious

- Open Physical Stance
- Curious approach will encourage conversation and minimize judgement
- Calm, slightly quiet voice will encourage focus

Communication Issue vs Emotional Crisis???

Communication Issue:

Individual feels misunderstood and is able to engage in a conversation in a constructive way

- Using the **helping stance** is often enough to de-escalate a situation and help a person feel heard.
- Remember to repeat, communicate understanding and start with where the individual is at.

Repeat: Use phrases such as “so what I’m hearing is”, “it sounds like” to summarize the story and meaning of what the person is saying.

Communicate Understanding: Use verbal and non-verbal communication to show that you understand and want to help. We don’t have to support inappropriate behaviors, but we can empathize with the struggle of the persons emotions.

Starting Where They Are At: Don’t jump ahead of the concern being presented by the individual. If they are still struggling with feeling understood, stay with that before moving onto problem solving.

*If they get stuck in the needing support phase and can’t problem solve, ask them to schedule an appointment, or if they would like a referral to the Mental Wellness and Personal Development Service, or another community based resource. Thank them for letting you talk with them and summarize where they are at/next steps.

If at anytime the person becomes a threat to self/others, call 911.

If they
move out
of crisis

Emotional Crisis:

Individual is not able to regulate their emotions or control their thoughts.

- Before we can problem solve, we may have to help the individual regulate their emotions. If a person cannot engage in a productive way, consider them in crisis and try the following skills. Ask them if they need help, if you can sit with them, or if they want you to call someone. If they are open to assistance and are not a threat to themselves or others, try the following:

Distraction: Ask the individual to walk with you. Note that it can help to just get away from people for a bit (stay in eyesight of others if concerned about safety). Point out items that they can look at (“wow, look at all those whitecaps today,” “ooh have you seen this flower before”). Ask the individual what helps (music, coloring, breathing). Be sure to include some ridiculous examples (making snow angels on the ground, eating a whole pizza, etc.) to open the range of options and keep their attention.

Grounding Activities: Help a person feel safe in their body and the space (help orient them).

- * Breathing exercise: 3 counts in, 4 counts out-coordinating body movements.
- * Physical grounding: sit down, feet on the ground, mindfulness or progressive muscle relaxation.
- * Sensory grounding: 5 See, 4 Touch, 3 Hear, 2 Smell, 1 Taste.
- * Do not touch the individual or get too close without asking permission first.

**NO PROBLEM SOLVING WHEN IN THIS PHASE OF RESPONSE!
STAY FOCUSED ON CALMING EMOTIONS AND KEEPING THEM
PRESENT.**